



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Ysgol Gymuned Y Ffridd

**Gwalchmai
Holyhead
LL65 4SG**

Date of inspection: January 2024

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Ysgol Gymuned Y Ffridd

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymuned y Ffridd
Local authority	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	85
Pupils of statutory school age	67
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	10
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.7%)</i>	16.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 13.2%)</i>	20.9%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	74.6%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2011
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/01/2016
Start date of inspection	29/01/2024

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:
mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Ysgol Gymuned y Ffridd is a happy, caring and homely community that places a high priority on the well-being of its pupils. The school is inclusive and staff and leaders promote healthy relationships well, with a particular emphasis on ensuring equal opportunities, equality and fairness for all pupils.

Many pupils make good progress from their starting points. They develop their reading, mathematical and creative understanding skills purposefully by the end of their time at the school.

A strong feature of the school is the friendly nature of the pupils. They take pride in their school and are considerate of others. They talk completely naturally and show interest and respect when discussing with their peers, staff and visitors.

A firm emphasis on shared values and a creative vision support teachers and staff to provide a wide range of learning experiences. Staff have an excellent working relationship with pupils. They ensure that learning activities have a suitable pace. However, opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback to improve their work and take more responsibility for their learning are limited.

Teachers plan interesting activities to engage pupils' interest and, as a result, a majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, they do not always ensure regular opportunities to develop and stretch pupils' numeracy and extended writing skills constructively enough over time.

The headteacher and leaders focus well on ensuring that all staff feel that they are part of the school team. They share a clear vision to provide a well-rounded education based on supporting pupils' well-being and working together for the future. Leaders, including the headteacher and governors, work effectively with each other and the community, which ensures an understanding of the school's objectives effectively. However, the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes are not effective enough to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, appropriate enough improvement priorities are not identified or realised.

Recommendations

- R1 Sharpen self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes to identify appropriate improvement priorities and plan strategically to implement them
- R2 Expand opportunities for pupils to respond independently to teachers' feedback to improve the quality of their work and choose their methods of presenting their learning
- R3 Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills and their numeracy skills

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Learning

During their time at the school, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals, make sound progress in their skills from their starting points. Across the school, most make sound progress in developing their social skills and many make consistent progress in their communication skills in both languages. They recall their previous learning confidently and build on it successfully.

Across the school, most pupils listen well to each other and to adults and respect the views of others. Most of the youngest pupils develop their Welsh-speaking skills beneficially and speak confidently when discussing what they prefer to have on toast during morning snack time. At the top of the school, many pupils develop their vocabulary suitably. For example, when discussing what material is best to use to make curtains to prevent light from escaping from homes during the Second World War.

Many of the school's youngest pupils enjoy listening to stories and re-reading them to their friends and adults. Most nursery and reception pupils identify and name a range of sounds and use this knowledge to begin reading simple words. As pupils move through the school, they build on this progress and discuss the content of text sensibly and maturely. By Year 6, many pupils read a range of appropriate texts in both languages, included digital texts, and apply their reading skills effectively across the curriculum.

Many pupils develop their writing skills appropriately as they move through the school. The youngest pupils make big marks in a good range of experiences and write words and simple sentences skilfully, for example when describing farm animals. By Year 2, many pupils write freely and present their work in an organised and clear manner. They write for different purposes and use adjectives and similes with increasing accuracy, for example when describing Nel the sheepdog.

In Years 3 and 4, many pupils transfer their writing skills successfully and creatively, for example when writing an imaginary portrayal based on the story of Black Bart (Barti Ddu). By Year 6, many write effectively for different purposes, for example when creating information pamphlets to persuade people to visit the mountains of Eryri. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to write extended pieces and to refine and improve their work regularly enough.

From an early age, the mathematics skills of a majority of pupils develop soundly. The youngest pupils acquire basic mathematics skills appropriately. By Year 2, they

develop a good range of mathematical skills and make sound progress, for example when building 3D shapes and when placing odd and even numbers in order. In Years 3 and 4, many use mathematical features, including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. By Year 6, many pupils use their number skills to measure different parts of their bodies. They also gather, present and interpret information intelligently, for example by presenting information in a bar graph on the world's highest mountains. However, overall, a majority of pupils across the school do not make consistent enough progress in developing their numeracy skills across the areas of learning.

Most pupils' digital skills develop effectively in interesting activities across the areas of learning. The youngest pupils use technology to support their literacy and numeracy skills. By Year 6, most pupils develop digital skills fairly confidently to research and present information in a database about the countries of the Commonwealth.

Most pupils' creative skills develop very well and they use them successfully across the curriculum. The youngest pupils use imaginative materials to imitate milking cows and build a tractor from milk crates. The oldest pupils emulate the style of famous and local artists successfully. They use a variety of materials and styles skilfully to produce impressive artwork.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

One of the school's strengths is its homely and friendly atmosphere. Nearly all pupils are polite, happy and play with other pupils in a friendly manner during break times. One of the notable aspects of the school is the way in which pupils talk naturally to adults in a variety of situations. They feel that they can trust staff to listen to them and respond to their concerns or needs, where necessary. Pupils are caring and willing to work confidently with others. Nearly all pupils feel safe within the school's inclusive environment.

Many pupils show enthusiasm when taking part in fitness sessions and understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily and the importance of a balanced diet for their health. These activities reinforce and confirm pupils' understanding of the importance of keeping healthy. Nearly all pupils also have a sound awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe online.

Many pupils show a willingness to undertake their learning activities and carry out their tasks energetically. They concentrate well and demonstrate resilience and perseverance when undertaking learning activities both in the classroom and outdoors. They find answers by discussing with their peers often before seeking help from teachers. At the top of the school, many pupils work harmoniously with others, listen well to instructions and presentations from staff and respect each other's points of view during discussions. A majority of pupils discuss their previous learning confidently and respond appropriately to feedback to improve some aspects of their work, for example their spelling and punctuation. Most pupils develop as ethical citizens, for example by planning trips around Eryri which are suitable for people with disabilities.

Most pupils are willing to suggest ideas about the kind of topics they would like to learn about within their chosen theme. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils work with a local musician to think of ideas when scripting a musical based on the legend of the bandit, Madam Wen. The oldest pupils identify aspects of the Second World War that they would like to investigate, such as the life of an evacuee.

Members of the school council fulfil their duties conscientiously and take pride in their achievements in improving their environment, for example by growing vegetables in the garden and arranging for the school cook to cook the produce for the rest of the school's pupils. Most pupils contribute thoughtfully to various charities and have firm ideas about who should benefit from their contributions. For example, the school council decided to make a donation to a local guide dog charity following the school's thanksgiving service. This has a positive effect on their understanding of other people's needs, both locally and nationally.

Most pupils appreciate that teachers seek their opinions when planning themes and learning experiences. They enjoy contributing ideas and questions to the mind maps and interactive idea boards. This strengthens the relationship of joint planning and respect when listening to pupils' contributions.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school is developing a curriculum that reflects the nature and context of the community in full, which includes designing learning activities that reflect the culture and language of the area. Leaders have a clear vision for delivering a curriculum that is based on promoting a caring community where pupils are encouraged to do their best.

Learning activities reflect the culture and history of the area effectively and the curriculum focuses on contemporary Welsh culture. This contributes towards developing the Welshness of the school's pupils. Staff provide a broad and balanced curriculum that builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills of a majority of pupils' effectively.

Teachers plan stimulating experiences that reinforce and enrich learning. For example, as part of the theme on the 'Victorian era', Year 3 and 4 pupils visited a museum in Shropshire and the youngest pupils received a visit from a local farmer and his tractor. Through these rich experiences, they deepen their knowledge and understanding of the agricultural culture and history of the local area. The school provides exciting opportunities for pupils to work with local artists and national poets, for example when creating attractive artwork that reflects the history of the local community.

Staff set clear learning objectives and use a range of purposeful resources to engage pupils' interest. In the best practice, teachers ensure that their lessons are well paced. They remind pupils of their previous learning and question them skilfully. Staff encourage pupils by praising their contributions and ideas. They support pupils to use relevant strategies to reflect on and improve the quality of their work and to not be afraid of making mistakes. For example, the school's oldest pupils use strategies to persevere with tasks and improve their work, which leads pupils to discuss with others to find a solution.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and ensure that most engage and work diligently during lessons. Teachers have good and up-to-date subject knowledge and use a variety of effective teaching methods to stimulate and encourage pupils to learn. Assistants work alongside teachers skilfully and contribute effectively to pupils' learning.

Staff encourage pupils to take part in a range of activities that promote fitness and physical health regularly. For example, swimming lessons and regular fitness sessions are held. These contribute effectively to developing healthy and confident individuals.

The principles of foundation learning have been established firmly in the school's youngest years. Staff develop pupils' skills effectively by providing them with exciting and interesting experiences through activities and challenges in the classrooms and the outdoor area. This promotes confident independent learners. The school's oldest pupils are given opportunities to develop their independent skills increasingly in lessons across the curriculum. However, they are not given sufficient opportunities to help them to make proactive choices about the way in which they present their learning.

Teachers use a range of probing questioning methods, which are effective in recalling previous learning and guiding the direction of learning purposefully. Staff consider pupils' ideas sensibly when planning a range of purposeful activities. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Teachers provide appropriate oral feedback that supports pupils to identify mistakes in their work, including spelling and punctuation errors, for example. However, across the school, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to refine and improve the quality and content of their work following feedback. As a result, pupils do not pay meaningful attention to improving the most important aspects of their work.

Care, support and guidance

The care, support and guidance provided for pupils is a strong aspect within the school. The school is a welcoming, happy and inclusive community, with staff who value the contribution of each pupil. They know the pupils well, are willing to listen to them, meet their needs and support them to make them feel safe at school. The positive ethos and warm-hearted care of the staff help pupils to settle easily into school life. All staff contribute effectively to the school's supportive and caring ethos. This has a strong influence on the behaviour and courtesy of pupils and their respect for others, whatever their background.

Teachers use comprehensive procedures to gather information about pupils' achievements and track their progress. This information helps them to provide valuable support and interventions to improve pupils' learning and their personal and social development.

The ALN co-ordinator, together with the rest of the staff, plans effective interventions to support pupils' needs in the classroom, either individually or in small groups, where appropriate. The school has a range of comprehensive plans that are used effectively to provide support to improve pupils' outcomes. For example, the wide range of structured intervention programmes that improve pupils' speaking and

reading skills effectively. Teachers review these plans regularly with pupils, parents and relevant agencies to plan purposefully for the next steps in their learning.

The school places a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of trips and visits to support the curriculum. These engage pupils' interest in their learning and develop their understanding of their identity and heritage. They include, for example, visits to the local community and hiking up some of the mountains on Anglesey. The oldest pupils' horizons are broadened through visits to places further afield, such as Dangerpoint in Flintshire and an annual trip to London, which provide wider opportunities and experiences outside Wales.

The school provides beneficial opportunities that encourage pupils to participate socially in sports and leisure, for example through sports teams and tournaments, the school choir and competing in local and national Eisteddfodau, such as the Urdd. The contributions of an external entertainment company succeed in expanding and developing pupils' positive attitudes to well-being. This has a positive effect on their confidence and willingness to socialise.

Staff succeed in developing pupils' moral and spiritual attitudes well. For example, by holding collective worship assemblies, they emphasise the importance of respecting and helping others. Pupils come to respect other people's needs and situations, for example by organising a stall at the summer fair to sell goods to raise money for Children in Need.

The school has robust processes for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality. This has improved pupils' commitment to coming to school and has led to an increase in attendance. Staff promote a culture of safeguarding effectively and the arrangements are not a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

Leaders set a beneficial strategic direction for the school. Their vision is based on creating a happy and familial learning environment which enables pupils to be 'The best I can be'. All staff work together successfully to realise this vision and its effect can be seen on pupils' development, progress and well-being. The enthusiastic team of teachers and assistants support each other effectively to ensure rich provision in a local and Welsh context. The headteacher establishes a sense of belonging among the staff and a strong team ethos. They facilitate a culture of experimenting and trialling new practices to raise standards and improve pupils' skills. For example, teachers at the top of the school are trialling methods of rotating learning activities to cover all of the areas of learning and experiences of Curriculum for Wales.

Leaders ensure that relevant learning opportunities are available to staff to support their professional development, which link with the school's improvement priorities. They ensure that staff are given valuable opportunities to develop their professional practices. Most teachers attend training sessions and are given beneficial opportunities to discuss with other schools to share effective practices. A notable example is the cross-curricular planning which enriches pupils' learning.

Leaders have a fair understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved and developed. They have an appropriate timetable for evaluating

provision and pupils' outcomes. They consider and analyse evidence that shows the effect on pupils' progress against their current priorities.

However, self-evaluation arrangements do not lead to setting sufficiently appropriate priorities for the school. As a result, strategic planning is not specific or incisive enough.

Governors understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities well. They know the school well and are responsible for specific areas, based on the members' strengths and interests. They visit the school regularly and hold discussions with staff to evaluate provision and standards. As a result, they have thorough knowledge of recent developments, for example Curriculum for Wales and of the current arrangements for ALN.

Governors suggest ideas and strategies for how to improve specific areas within the school. For example, new resources have been trialled by the school to promote and raise the standards of pupils' emotional well-being. Learning activities have led to an improvement in pupils' attendance across the school, including those who are eligible for free school meals. This links with local and national priorities. These well-being activities have now been embedded successfully and are available to teachers across Wales on the Hwb platform.

Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding appropriately. They have a sound awareness of the importance of promoting a culture of healthy eating and drinking among pupils.

There is a productive relationship between the headteacher, staff and parents. They use effective communication methods to pass on information to parents and their children's experiences and progress, which is valued greatly.

Leaders ensure that staff make the best use of the building and grounds. This includes stimulating outdoor areas, such as the woodland and garden area. Leaders use the pupil development grant sensibly and allocate resources effectively to provide specific interventions across the school. For example, assistants provide beneficial support for pupils to progress with their learning.

Leaders monitor the budget carefully and ensure a fair allocation to provide enough resources to meet pupils' needs purposefully. They make good use of different grants that have been allocated to the school, for example by using the pupil development grant to provide support programmes for specific pupils.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body/members of the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales>)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website:

<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).